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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

Reporting period from 29 June to 30 October 2012

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my last report of 28 June 2012 (S/2012/502).

2. In a press statement issued on 18 July (SC/10712), the members of the Security Council welcomed the prevailing stability across the Blue Line and in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); the initiative of President Michel Sleiman in reconvening the National Dialogue and the declarations adopted thus far, in anticipation of the continuation of this process; and the transfer on 11 July by the Government of Lebanon of its annual contribution to the budget of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. They also expressed grave concern over repeated incidents of cross-border fire, incursions, abductions and arms trafficking across the Lebanese-Syrian border, as well as other border violations, underlining the importance of full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and the authority of the Lebanese State in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

3. Despite the ongoing volatility in the region, calm generally continued to hold along the Blue Line and in the UNIFIL area of operations during the reporting period. The few minor incidents that arose were handled effectively through UNIFIL liaison and coordination channels. The parties continued to affirm their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006), but there was no substantive progress in the implementation of their respective obligations outstanding under the resolution. There was a worrying spate of threatening public statements, partly reflecting wider regional tensions.

4. Forces of the Syrian Arab Republic were responsible for frequent incidents of cross-border shelling; incursions across Lebanon's borders; and one air strike during the reporting period. As at 23 October, at least 11 Lebanese citizens had been killed and over 40 injured as a result of cross-border shelling. The Lebanese Armed Forces reported intercepting weapons destined for the Syrian Arab Republic, and at least one confrontation on the Lebanese border with elements of the Syrian opposition. A former Minister of the Government of Lebanon, Michel Samaha, was arrested for



involvement in smuggling explosives from the Syrian Arab Republic allegedly as part of a plot against targets in Lebanon. Two of the eleven Lebanese pilgrims abducted on 22 May in the Syrian Arab Republic were released. In October, a number of funerals were held in Lebanon for members of Hizbullah who were apparently killed in fighting in Syria in areas near the Lebanese border.

5. Tripoli remained a particular focus for Syria-related violence. Fighting broke out on 28 July and again from 19 to 25 August between residents of the predominantly Sunni neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the predominantly Alawite neighbourhood of Jebel Mohsen. The violence left at least 18 people dead and over 80 injured. The security forces, with political backing, adopted a more robust posture and deployed to contain the violence and restore order in Tripoli. They also successfully mounted operations to release a number of those who had been abducted in a wave of kidnappings committed across the country.

6. The visit by Pope Benedict XVI to Lebanon from 14 to 16 September provided a welcome period of cohesion among Lebanese of different confessions. The Government continued to maintain its policy of “disassociation” designed to contain the impact of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and protect the sovereignty, the stability and the independence of Lebanon, despite increasing pressure on the policy. Lebanese political leaders held two meetings of the National Dialogue following the Baabda Declaration of 11 June.

7. The number of Syrian refugees seeking assistance in Lebanon rose sharply. As at 23 October, UNHCR estimated that more than 100,000 Syrian refugees were receiving assistance in Lebanon, more than double the estimate in my last report.

8. Preparations for parliamentary elections to be held in 2013 continued. A draft law was approved by the Cabinet on 7 August and discussion of the subject moved to Parliament.

9. On 27 September, I met with Prime Minister Najib Mikati in New York in the margins of the General Assembly. We emphasized the need to preserve the security and stability of Lebanon in the light of the regional implications and spill-over effects of the Syrian crisis, and the need for greater international support to help Lebanon provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to the growing numbers of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic.

10. On 19 October, Lebanon was shaken by a terrorist attack, which killed Brigadier-General Wissam al Hassan, the Head of the Information Branch of the Internal Security Forces, responsible for investigating domestic and external terrorism and espionage and ensuring the security of prominent political figures. The bomb blast in the Ashrafieh neighbourhood of Beirut also killed General Hassan’s aide and a passer-by and injured dozens. This political assassination led to outbursts of serious violence and calls for the Government of Prime Minister Mikati to resign. In a statement issued on 19 October (SC/10799), the Security Council strongly condemned the attack and demanded an immediate end to the use of violence against political figures. I strongly condemned the bomb explosion and spoke with President Sleiman and Prime Minister Mikati to emphasize the strong commitment of the international community to Lebanon’s security and stability at this critical time.

11. General Hassan’s death triggered further fighting in Tripoli, leaving at least 7 dead and over 20 injured. In Beirut, one gunman was killed and several were

injured during operations by the Lebanese Armed Forces, who deployed heavily to ensure calm and remove roadblocks set up by protestors. Following General Hassan's funeral on 21 October, protestors attempted to storm the Grand Serail government building in Beirut. The violence was short-lived after calls by the 14 March leadership for protestors to disperse. The opposition, however, has called for the resignation of the government and announced that it will not engage in dialogue with the government. It has also withdrawn from parliamentary proceedings. President Sleiman has since launched a series of consultations with Lebanese political leaders to find a path forward.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon area of operations

12. There were no major incidents in the UNIFIL area of operations during the reporting period. Owing to developments elsewhere in Lebanon, the Lebanese Armed Forces had to redeploy additional battalions to areas outside the UNIFIL area of operations. However, the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained its strong cooperation with UNIFIL.

13. The Israel Defense Forces continued to occupy the northern part of the village of Ghajar and adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). In addition, Israel has still not responded to the UNIFIL proposal regarding security arrangements aimed to facilitate the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area, submitted to both parties on 25 June 2011. The Lebanese Armed Forces consented to the proposal on 19 July 2011.

14. The Israel Defense Forces continued to make almost daily intrusions into Lebanese airspace. During the reporting period, in addition to the significant number of unmanned aerial vehicles overflying Lebanese territory, UNIFIL observed several air exercises, including formations of multiple fighter jets. These overflights are violations of resolution 1701 (2006), as well as of Lebanese sovereignty. UNIFIL has continued to protest all air violations, calling on the Israeli authorities to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested the violations, while the Government of Israel continued to maintain that the overflights are a necessary security measure.

15. UNIFIL remained focused on maintaining calm along the Blue Line, including in response to a few incidents that raised tensions. On 16 August, the Israel Defense Forces alleged that a group of civilians, gathered on the road between Kafr Kela and El Adeisse, had thrown stones across the Israeli technical fence, injuring their personnel. The Lebanese Armed Forces later alleged that an Israel Defense Forces patrol had launched tear gas grenades at civilians standing in the same vicinity. UNIFIL did not observe the incidents but did observe the Lebanese Armed Forces dispersing a crowd soon thereafter. UNIFIL conducted an investigation into the incidents, and recommended that the Lebanese Armed Forces ensure its presence whenever there are gatherings along the Blue Line, and that the Israel Defense Forces refrain from sending any projectiles across the Blue Line unless acting in immediate self-defence.

16. There were a number of inadvertent violations in the UNIFIL area of operations during the reporting period, primarily by Lebanese civilians in areas along the Blue Line. Most violations in the Shab'a Farms area were committed by shepherds grazing their animals in the vicinity of the Blue Line. On 29 June, the Israel Defense Forces apprehended a shepherd who allegedly had crossed the Blue Line, and returned him the following day. On 9 September, a Lebanese civilian crossed the technical fence from Lebanon into Israel. He was returned by the Israel Defense Forces through the gate at Ras Naqoura. On 13 September, a Lebanese boy strayed into a minefield close to the Blue Line by Aytash-Sha'b. The Israel Defense Forces opened the technical fence, brought the boy into Israeli territory and returned him to Lebanon. Lebanese civilians were observed on several occasions picking wild fruit south of the Blue Line in Meiss al-Jabal and harvesting olives south of the Blue Line near Blida. Violations also occurred when civilians, including children, swam in the Wazzani/Hasbani River close to the east bank, including when civilians climbed onto the bank. UNIFIL observed frequent violations by Lebanese civilians tending a garden next to the main road by El Adeisse. The Israel Defense Forces also violated the Blue Line by digging trenches across a road east of Abasiya. On another occasion, a shepherd from the Israeli-occupied Golan violated the Blue Line and Israel Defense Forces personnel briefly violated the Line in an effort to bring him back across.

17. UNIFIL is working with both parties to prevent violations of the Blue Line, using its liaison and coordination arrangements. UNIFIL called on the Lebanese Armed Forces to increase its presence and monitoring activities and reminded both parties that they have the responsibility for preventing all violations that arise on their side of the Blue Line. Both parties agreed that Blue Line marking in the Meiss al-Jabal area was a priority, and the first agreed markers are now in place. In the Wazzani/Hasbani area UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces increased their presence, and resort owners were required to inform guests not to swim across the river. After UNIFIL and both parties established that the trenches dug by the Israel Defense Forces near Abasiya were north of the Blue Line, both sides cooperated with UNIFIL to fill in the trenches and restore the status quo ante.

18. UNIFIL conducted an investigation into construction works along the riverbed of the Wazzani/Hasbani River south of Ghajar, which had been protested by the Israel Defense Forces. UNIFIL found that violations of the Blue Line were committed in the construction of dams to create swimming pools in the river alongside resorts that are being developed on the Lebanese side. This issue was discussed in tripartite meetings, and the Lebanese Armed Forces stated that they had ordered all works to be stopped, and that none would be permitted on the riverbed without first making a request to senior Lebanese Armed Forces officials and carrying out due coordination with UNIFIL.

19. During the reporting period, the Israel Defense Forces shared information with UNIFIL detailing the arrest of 12 Israeli civilians, including residents of Ghajar, accused of smuggling explosives, improvised explosive device detonation systems and weapons into Israel from Lebanon in early June. The Israel Defense Forces later informed UNIFIL that another incident occurred on 31 August, when an individual was arrested on the Israeli side while trying to smuggle drugs and other items into Israel. According to the Israel Defense Forces, his Lebanese accomplice escaped back into Lebanon. The Israel Defense Forces alleged that both smuggling incidents occurred on the outskirts of the southern part of Ghajar. UNIFIL has no record of

any smuggling activity during this period. UNIFIL has requested both parties to ensure timely exchange of information through the established liaison and coordination arrangements.

20. Further to my last report, the Lebanese Armed Forces redeployed an additional three battalions to areas of Lebanon outside the UNIFIL area of operations to meet other security challenges, and returned the three companies that had been redeployed earlier. Lebanese Armed Forces Commander General Kahwaji maintained close contact with the UNIFIL Force Commander to explain and coordinate the redeployments in advance. In the light of the reduced presence of Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers, UNIFIL maintains full security control of its area of operations by increasing its operational activities, including its patrols, independent of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The current strength of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the area of operations is approximately two brigades and one battalion.

21. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their daily operations, including, on average, some 34 coordinated activities per day, in addition to operating seven co-located checkpoints along the Litani River. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces also continued to carry out joint counter-rocket-launching operations in areas near the Blue Line. Joint activities also continued, including capability exercises and training activities on land and at sea, as described in my last report (S/2012/502). UNIFIL will remain engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces in order to build sustainable operational arrangements in its area of operations under the present circumstances. For its part, UNIFIL conducted an average of 300 vehicle and foot patrols daily, in addition to regular helicopter patrols and other operational activities.

22. UNIFIL generally enjoyed full freedom of movement throughout its area of operations during the reporting period. Nevertheless, there were a limited number of restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNIFIL. Three incidents in the general area of Ayta ash-Sha'b were particularly noteworthy. On 10 August, a UNIFIL patrol was blocked by two vehicles and a crowd of civilians. Individuals from the crowd subsequently snatched a rucksack from the UNIFIL vehicle. On 11 October, a UNIFIL convoy was blocked by two vehicles and a group of civilians and a number of items were taken. Again on 13 October, two vehicles of a five-vehicle UNIFIL convoy were blocked by a car and a group of civilians took UNIFIL equipment. While many items were later recovered by the Lebanese Armed Forces and returned to UNIFIL, some are still missing. The Force Commander and the Lebanese Armed Forces visited the municipal authorities of Ayta ash-Sha'b to impress on them the importance of the full freedom of movement of UNIFIL.

23. On three other occasions, cameras were taken from UNIFIL patrols. Additionally, there were a few incidents where individuals, often riding motorcycles, followed UNIFIL patrols, made unfriendly gestures or threw stones, and temporarily halted the patrols. On one occasion, a tractor briefly blocked the road in front of a patrol. Following the assassination of General Hassan on 19 October, roads were temporarily blocked by protesters in the areas of Shab'a, Kafr Shouba and Suq al-Khan. There were several isolated incidents of stone throwing, often by children. Where required, the Lebanese Armed Forces intervened to bring a quick end to incidents. In all cases, UNIFIL was able to continue its patrolling activities.

24. These incidents notwithstanding, UNIFIL relations with the local population remained generally positive. Regular liaison and outreach activities focused on conflict management and confidence-building measures and on providing community services. UNIFIL also organized social and cultural events involving local communities. Quick-impact projects continued to be implemented by troop-contributing countries and through the UNIFIL budget. Following recommendations made in the strategic review, UNIFIL is enhancing cultural awareness and conflict sensitivity through programmes organized internally for peacekeepers.

25. UNIFIL continued to provide assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps to establish an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons between the Blue Line and the Litani River, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL. This continues to be a long-term objective, given that there have been a number of incidents since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), such as rocket attacks, that demonstrated that weapons and hostile armed elements ready to use them were still present within the area of operations.

26. The Government of Israel continued to allege that Hizbullah had been building up its military positions and units inside populated areas in southern Lebanon and that unauthorized weapons were being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations. In cases in which specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons in its area of operations, UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, remains determined to act with all means available within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement. UNIFIL, however, does not proactively search for weapons in the south. It visits locations after receiving an alert and in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. Under its mandate, UNIFIL cannot enter private property unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity from that location. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with nor found evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued to state that it would act immediately to put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions.

27. During the reporting period, UNIFIL observed unauthorized armed personnel and weapons in its area of operations in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) on several occasions. On 7 August, the Lebanese Armed Forces discovered three boxes of dynamite/industrial explosives and detonators inside a car belonging to a local civilian in the vicinity of Naffakhiyeh. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they had arrested the man and that, although the investigation revealed that the dynamite was for commercial purposes only, he would be prosecuted. On 16 August, UNIFIL deminers discovered an anti-tank mine with a detonation cord on an access lane leading to a point along the Blue Line in the area of Rumaysh. The Lebanese Armed Forces swiftly removed the device, which was linked to an additional seven anti-tank mines and four improvised explosive devices. On 18 August, a group of individuals were observed firing what appeared to be a rifle near Bint Jbeil. UNIFIL also observed civilians carrying hunting weapons south of the Litani River in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). In each case, UNIFIL patrols moved to halt the hunting activity. The Lebanese Armed Forces detained hunters and confiscated their weapons on several occasions. Armed persons and weapons remained inside Palestinian refugee camps within the UNIFIL area of operations.

28. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations and training the Lebanese naval forces. Since my last report, the Lebanese navy and customs officials inspected 501 vessels in order to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board.

29. UNIFIL and Lebanese naval forces conducted one workshop and 11 cadet training session, as well as 31 at-sea training activities on-board the Maritime Task Force vessels, for Lebanese junior officers. In addition, on three occasions during the reporting period, maritime interdiction operation exercises, each lasting over two days, were conducted with the Lebanese Armed Forces Navy.

30. The Israel Defense Forces dropped depth charges, and fired warning shots along the line of buoys on a few occasions to ward off Lebanese fishing boats in the vicinity of the line. UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

31. UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements with the parties continued to function well. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained effective daily interaction and liaison activities at all levels. UNIFIL also maintained effective liaison and coordination with the Israel Defense Forces. There was no progress in establishing a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

32. The parties continued to demonstrate their readiness to engage constructively in UNIFIL efforts to decrease tensions. UNIFIL continued these efforts in the monthly tripartite meetings, chaired by the UNIFIL Force Commander, and at the bilateral level. The tripartite forum remained the key mechanism for addressing security and military operational issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

33. At the tripartite meeting held on 4 July, the Lebanese Armed Forces reiterated its request to assume security control of the SD1 road, which lies outside the Ghajar area occupied by the Israel Defense Forces. UNIFIL will continue its bilateral discussions and is following up with a detailed proposal, which will aim to transfer security control of the road to the Lebanese Armed Forces, allowing for its use by Lebanese civilians while ensuring adequate security measures. The overall objective remains the complete withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from northern Ghajar and adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

34. At the same tripartite meeting, the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces reiterated their readiness to take forward initial discussions on the issue of maritime security. Following an initial round of bilateral discussions, UNIFIL has identified some common points, which it hopes to further develop in future rounds.

35. The Israel Defense Forces reported that a standoff occurred on 20 June between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces in the area of the Wazzani/Hasbani River. The incident was not observed by UNIFIL. UNIFIL is consulting both parties, with a view to developing specific measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

36. Steady progress was made in the process of visibly marking the Blue Line. As at 25 October, the total number of points for marking stood at 257. UNIFIL deminers have cleared access to 228 points, 193 of which have been measured. Some 150 Blue Line markers have been constructed and 138 verified by both parties. In line with the recommendations of the strategic review, UNIFIL started to address with the parties the marking of those points that thus far had been deemed contentious. Both parties displayed readiness to discuss such points and reconfirmed their commitment to the Blue Line marking process, which they perceive as a valuable confidence-building tool, and a way to provide clarity to troops on the ground and the local population about the precise location of the Line.

37. In line with the strategic priorities identified by the strategic review, UNIFIL continued to work closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces through the strategic dialogue, with a view to increasing the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces, not only as a prerequisite for the gradual assumption of security control of the area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters, but also to support movement towards a permanent ceasefire.

C. Disarming armed groups

38. Resolution 1701 (2006) calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Agreement, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), that require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.

39. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), continues to restrict the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. Hizbullah has continued to acknowledge openly that it maintains a substantial military capacity separate from that of the Lebanese State. On 3 October, three Hizbullah militants were killed and several other people were wounded as a result of explosions at a depot for ammunition in the Bekaa town of Nabi Sheet. Hizbullah representatives have repeatedly asserted that the arms of the movement continue to serve as a deterrent and will not be used in a first strike against Israel, but they have threatened to launch rocket attacks on multiple targets across Israel in the event of an Israeli attack on Lebanon. Hizbullah has acknowledged that they launched the unmanned aerial vehicle shot down by the Israeli Air Force over Israel on 6 October. During the reporting period, the Lebanese authorities sought clarifications from representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on a statement by the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards suggesting the presence of members of their Quds Forces in Lebanon.

40. The proliferation of arms outside the control of the State remains a threat to domestic stability and public safety, as highlighted by the fighting in Tripoli in July and August. Other incidents included, on 5 July, a foiled assassination attempt against Boutros Harb, a prominent member of Parliament. On 9 August, former Information Minister Michel Samaha was arrested for involvement in smuggling explosives from the Syrian Arab Republic allegedly as part of a plot against targets in Lebanon with the aim of provoking confessional strife. Two Syrian senior military officers and a Syrian presidential adviser have also been named in the

investigation. On 15 August, dozens of Syrian nationals and one Turkish businessman were abducted by armed members of a prominent clan purportedly in retaliation for the abduction of one of their relatives in the Syrian Arab Republic.

41. Following the assassination of General Hassan on 19 October, Future Movement leader Fouad Siniora stated that his party will not participate in future sessions of the National Dialogue, which had met twice up until that time during the reporting period. At the first meeting, on 16 August, participants from across the political spectrum worked together under the chairmanship of President Sleiman to address the security situation in the country, including the recent spate of kidnappings. At the meeting on 20 September, President Sleiman presented a paper setting out an initial vision for a comprehensive national defence strategy, including in respect of the arms held by Hizbullah. The paper places the strategy within the framework of national and international legal instruments, including resolution 1701 (2006). It highlights the need to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces and looks for agreement around the principle of the exclusive right of the Lebanese Armed Forces to the use of force and frameworks and mechanisms for control and use of Hizbullah's arms until such time as the Lebanese Armed Forces are so strengthened. Participants agreed to consider the President's paper as a starting-point for discussion.

42. There has been no progress on the dismantling of military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah al-Intifada outside the control of the Lebanese State, as decided in the National Dialogue in 2006 and called for repeatedly by the United Nations. All but one of these bases are located along the eastern Lebanese-Syrian border, compromising Lebanese sovereignty and impeding the ability of the State to effectively monitor and control part of that border.

43. There have been no major security incidents in the Palestinian refugee camps in the reporting period. Access issues to the Nahr al-Bared camp, which sparked violence in June, were largely resolved. On 2 July, a new head of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee was appointed by the Government to work with all stakeholders dealing with the Palestinian file in Lebanon.

D. Arms embargo and border control

44. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States were to prevent the sale or the supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals, or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft. In the same resolution, the Council also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points so as to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms and related materiel.

45. Israeli Government representatives have consistently alleged that there are significant, ongoing arms transfers to Hizbullah across the Lebanese-Syrian border. The United Nations takes these allegations seriously but is not in a position to independently verify them. The Israeli authorities have also, in the context of the crisis in Syria, expressed concern at the possibility of any future movement of chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon. Senior representatives of Hizbullah have insisted that they have no intention of acquiring such weapons.

46. In letters dated 9 July (S/2012/525), 17 July and 26 July (S/2012/586), the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic made further assertions of cross-border incidents and arms transfers affecting Syrian sovereignty from Lebanese territory. The Lebanese Armed Forces have arrested alleged smugglers and seized weapons on a number of occasions.

47. There was regular cross-border shelling from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon during the reporting period, as well as incursions into Lebanese territory by elements of the Syrian armed forces. Syrian shells landing in or close to Lebanese villages in the northern region of Akkar, some of them several kilometres from the border, caused the temporary displacement of local citizens and refugees, material damage, injury and loss of life. Cross-border attacks also occurred in the eastern Bekaa region. On 17 September, a Syrian aircraft dropped bombs in the Khirbet Daoud area near the Bekaa town of Aarsal. On 21 September, the Lebanese Armed Forces reported incidents in the eastern Bekaa involving the Lebanese Armed Forces and armed elements of the Syrian opposition; no casualties were reported. On 9 July, the Lebanese Government decided to deploy additional units of the Lebanese Armed Forces to affected areas. The Lebanese Armed Forces continue to seek to tighten control along the border to the best of its abilities, notwithstanding the difficulties, including of terrain, involved. At the political level, President Sleiman and Prime Minister Mikati protested border violations on 23 July and 4 September, respectively, through diplomatic channels in Beirut and Damascus.

48. The continued reports of arms trafficking across the Lebanese-Syrian border and the recurrence of cross-border incidents and attacks from the Syrian Arab Republic underline the need for the Lebanese security authorities to have more effective capabilities at their disposal to manage and control the border. Donors, with the support of the United Nations, have sought to assist the Government in this regard, with a particular focus on the need for a comprehensive border management strategy involving all the Lebanese Government agencies concerned. Partly in response to these new challenges, domestically and on the borders with the Syrian Arab Republic, on 20 September, the Cabinet approved a new medium-term plan budgeted at \$1.6 billion to increase the capacity and capability of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Lebanese authorities have indicated that they will be looking for United Nations assistance and donor support for this plan as part of the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

49. The Syrian crisis has caused a significant increase in refugee flows into Lebanon during the reporting period. As at 23 October, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 100,000 refugees were receiving assistance in Lebanon from UNHCR, its partners and the Government of Lebanon. UNHCR now estimates that up to 120,000 Syrians will require assistance in Lebanon by the end of 2012, roughly three times the number anticipated earlier this year. Assistance is also needed for Lebanese communities hosting Syrian refugees and for Lebanese citizens displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic. With winter approaching, UNHCR is seeking additional international support in the context of its regional response plan of 27 September, which included an appeal for \$106 million for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, of which only 39 per cent is now funded.

50. In addition, Palestinians refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic have sought refuge in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon after their camps in Syria came

under attack. As at 23 October, approximately 1,930 Palestinian families from Syria had made themselves known in Lebanon to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is seeking to provide them with assistance in cooperation with NGOs.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

51. The Lebanese Mine Action Centre, a unit of the Lebanese Armed Forces, is the national authority for mine action in Lebanon with responsibility for the management of all humanitarian clearance and mine action data. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team continued to support UNIFIL demining activities along the Blue Line by providing training to contingents, as well as conducting validation and quality assurance monitoring. Eight military manual clearance teams, three military explosives ordnance disposal teams and one military mechanical team from troop-contributing countries are currently deployed in the UNIFIL area of operations.

52. On 4 September, a woman was killed when an old anti-tank mine in her possession exploded. A soldier of the Lebanese Armed Forces was also injured in that incident.

F. Delineation of borders

53. During the reporting period there was again no progress towards delineating and demarcating the Syrian-Lebanese border, including in areas where it is uncertain or disputed, as called for in Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The impact of the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic on the border continues to highlight the importance of establishing clarity in this regard.

54. Equally there has been no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. Neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has reacted to the provisional definition of that area contained in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641).

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

55. As a matter of high priority, UNIFIL continuously reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures, ensured personnel safety awareness and conducted evacuation exercises, shelter and fire drills and other security training. UNIFIL continued to enhance physical security measures regarding force protection works for installations and assets. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities continued to cooperate to ensure that security threats are addressed appropriately. Complementing the measures taken by the Government of Lebanon, UNIFIL continued to apply its own risk mitigation measures. In an effort to reduce UNIFIL traffic on the main supply route from southern Lebanon to Beirut, UNIFIL is using a United Nations-contracted coastal vessel to transport military personnel and equipment between Beirut and Naqoura ports. UNIFIL has not been able thus far to acquire suitable land for an assembly area in Tyre, Lebanon, for United Nations staff and their dependants

in the event of an emergency. The current designated location does not meet the required security standards.

56. There were few developments in the status of cases in Lebanese courts related to past serious attacks against UNIFIL, the latest of which took place in 2011. There were no further developments regarding investigations into forceful obstruction of UNIFIL activities. It is the responsibility of the Lebanese authorities to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel, equipment and premises, and to bring the perpetrators of unlawful acts to justice.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

57. As at 30 September 2012, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 11,528, including 437 women. The civilian component consisted of 337 international and 657 national civilian staff members, including 100 and 166 women, respectively. Observer Group Lebanon, whose members are assigned to assist UNIFIL in the fulfilment of its mandated tasks, was composed of 53 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers.

58. Portugal and Timor-Leste personnel, the latter embedded within the Portuguese contingent, finalized their withdrawal from UNIFIL by the end of June. Spain withdrew its mine-clearance team capabilities and intends to reduce progressively its contribution to UNIFIL to approximately 558 personnel, beginning with the next rotation of its troops in November 2012. Following the withdrawal of a German supply ship in July, the total strength of the Maritime Task Force, currently operating with a Brazilian flagship, is eight vessels and two helicopters.

V. Observations

59. I welcome the general calm that continues to prevail in the UNIFIL area of operations. I commend both parties for their continued commitment to the cessation of hostilities and to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), in cooperation with UNIFIL. The strategic partnership between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces and strong liaison and coordination arrangements with both parties have contributed to the current security environment. I urge both parties to continue to protect their achievements along the Blue Line and to prevent regional tensions from putting them in jeopardy.

60. This is all the more important in the light of deliberate attempts to destabilize Lebanon, most notably in the terrorist bombing in Beirut that killed General Hassan and others on 19 October, which I strongly condemned. I underline the call of the Security Council for the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of this crime to be brought to justice and for an end to the use of intimidation and violence against political figures and to impunity in Lebanon. I also underline the appeal of the Council members to the Lebanese people to preserve national unity in the face of this murderous attempt to undermine the country's stability and their call upon all Lebanese parties to continue engaging in dialogue. I look to the strong leadership of President Sleiman and responsible political leadership from all parties to guide the country through the present period of uncertainty and to address the very serious issues raised by the assassination. This is a Lebanese process, but in the meantime,

the United Nations and the international community have a strong interest in supporting the Lebanese State and in the continuity of the institutions of the country. I stress that it is in the interest of Lebanon's continued stability that all Lebanese parties work cooperatively, particularly given the need to ensure that free, fair and credible parliamentary elections are duly organized and held on schedule in 2013.

61. With regard to the Blue Line, I am concerned that threatening statements elsewhere have the potential to affect the calm prevailing across it. I have already made clear my serious concern at the acknowledgement by Hizbullah that they had launched an unarmed unmanned aerial vehicle into Israeli airspace. For the parties to sustain the present calm, it is essential to avoid provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric, to exercise utmost restraint and to prevent hostile activity from being initiated from their respective territory. The parties should use the liaison and coordination arrangements with UNIFIL to the maximum extent, and should allow UNIFIL in the first instance to deal with the situation.

62. As noted in previous reports, there has been a lack of progress towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict, as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). I hope, however, that, after six years of unprecedented stability and calm along the Blue Line, both parties realize that it is in their mutual interest to focus anew on that goal in full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The parties have yet to take full advantage of the security environment established through the work of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces. It is necessary to remind the parties that the deployment of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon cannot substitute for a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution.

63. I strongly welcome the parties' receptiveness to working with UNIFIL to address points of contention and decrease tensions on the ground along the Blue Line. The parties must maintain their commitment to the cessation of hostilities; fully respect the Blue Line in its entirety; continue working with UNIFIL on pragmatic and constructive confidence-building measures along the Blue Line, including visibly marking the Blue Line; and work to strengthen the liaison and coordination arrangements.

64. Major obligations under the resolution are still outstanding and require action by each party. Israel must withdraw its forces from the northern part of Ghajar and adjacent area north of the Blue Line and cease all violations of Lebanese airspace, which exacerbate tensions in the UNIFIL area of operations and have the potential to trigger a serious incident. Lebanon must make further progress towards exercising effective authority over all Lebanese territory, preventing the use of that territory for hostile activities, and ensuring the implementation of Government decisions and of resolution 1701 (2006) with respect to an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government and of UNIFIL.

65. The Lebanese Armed Forces carry a heavy burden with multiple security responsibilities across Lebanon, including along the Syrian border, which have required redeployments of Lebanese Armed Forces troops from the UNIFIL area of operations. Despite this, the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained strong cooperation with UNIFIL and strived to continue the same level of coordinated activities with UNIFIL. The Lebanese Armed Forces also continued to take action to quell incidents along the Blue Line. This is commendable. Yet, continued and increased coordination by the two Forces is essential. I urge the Lebanese Armed Forces to continue to maintain a significant presence in southern Lebanon commensurate with

the important tasks it must perform in line with Lebanon's obligations under resolution 1701 (2006).

66. There have been a few incidents that have impeded the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endangered the safety and security of peacekeepers during the reporting period. The freedom of movement, safety and security of UNIFIL personnel are integral to the effective execution of their tasks. The primary responsibility for ensuring UNIFIL freedom of movement in its area of operations lies with the Lebanese authorities. I call on the Lebanese authorities to take firm, resolute action against the perpetrators, and to work with UNIFIL to strengthen the response and the investigations into these incidents. Effective measures must be taken to curb and prevent all incidents that impede the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endanger the safety and security of peacekeepers.

67. For much of the reporting period, attention in Lebanon was focused on challenges deriving from the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. These challenges are of grave concern to the United Nations since they have the potential to seriously impact the security and stability of Lebanon, which is a central concern of resolution 1701 (2006) and other resolutions of the Security Council. The most acute impact has been along the Lebanese-Syrian borders, where serious violations have repeatedly occurred. I condemn all such incidents and deplore the resulting loss of life, injury, displacement and destruction of property. I call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cease all violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). I note the clear stance taken by President Sleiman and Prime Minister Mikati on this issue, and the steps taken by the Government to strengthen the presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces on the border with the Syrian Arab Republic.

68. Reports suggesting support by Lebanese political forces to the parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic are of grave concern and contradict their stated commitments not to let Lebanon be drawn into the Syrian crisis. I note in this context the reports of the deaths of members of Hizbullah fighting inside the Syrian Arab Republic. It is imperative for all Lebanese forces to refrain from any involvement. In this and other contexts I note the continuing importance of the Baabda Declaration, including the commitment therein to the neutrality of Lebanon in respect of external conflicts, and call upon all parties in Lebanon to act in accordance with it.

69. The violence that occurred in Tripoli and the spate of kidnappings elsewhere in the country are of deep concern. Deliberate attempts at destabilizing Lebanon by provoking sectarian conflict underscore the importance of continued international support for the Lebanese State and Armed Forces to prevent the country from being drawn into regional events. I welcome the robust steps taken by the security forces, with broad political support, to address threats to stability. It is significant that arrests have been made in several cases, given the need to embed accountability and to extend the authority of the State. The recurrence of violent incidents underlines the extent to which Lebanon needs to take further concrete steps to counter the prevalence of weapons outside the authority of the State, and to ensure the effective implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

70. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the State continues to pose a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and stability, and stands

in contradiction to the country's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). It has long been my view that achieving the objective of the resolutions in this regard can only be accomplished through a Lebanese-led political process with the ultimate aim of ensuring that there are no weapons outside the authority of the Government in Lebanon. I continue to believe that national dialogue constitutes the best way forward. I commend President Sleiman's initiative in tabling his vision for a national defence strategy, including with regard to use and control of arms held by Hizbullah, which is an important starting point for discussion. I call on all Lebanese political leaders to seize this opportunity and to participate actively in this process to realize the formation of such a strategy in furtherance of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

71. I reiterate in this context the need to implement earlier decisions of the National Dialogue, and specifically those related to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases. I welcome the steps taken to revitalize the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, and encourage the Government and all concerned to support its new head. The need to improve the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, without prejudice to the resolution of the refugee question and the context of a comprehensive peace settlement, remains pressing, as does the need for the strongest possible support from Member States for the work of UNRWA. Failure to urgently translate crucial support for UNRWA into funding for reconstruction and relief efforts for the Nahr al-Bared camp has the potential to be destabilizing in the current context.

72. The sharp increase in the number of Syrian refugees seeking assistance in Lebanon represents a growing challenge for the country and a heavy burden on resources. I commend the Government of Lebanon for meeting its humanitarian obligations in this regard, and the people of Lebanon who have opened their homes to their Syrian neighbours. It is important that the Government continue to plan for further possible influxes, given the continuation of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and prepare effectively with partners for more acute needs for assistance in the coming winter season. I pay tribute to UNHCR and other agencies and partner organizations for their strong support given to date, and note the limited international response so far to the UNHCR appeal to donors. I stress that the need now appears much greater than anticipated and encourage Member States urgently to look again at support for Lebanon.

73. As noted in my last report, the lack of full delineation and demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian border provides no explanation or justification for most of the violations reported. Nonetheless, I am concerned that such delineation and demarcation remain elusive. Similarly, I remain concerned that no progress has been made with regard to the Shab'a Farms area, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I call, once again, on the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I provided in October 2007 (see S/2007/641). I hope that circumstances will make it possible to refocus on both these issues as soon as possible.

74. I commend the robust role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces in ensuring domestic stability during the reporting period, and the strong political support they have received which must be sustained. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the Lebanese Armed Forces in bringing calm and underpinning unity in Lebanon; in working alongside UNIFIL in the south and at sea; in seeking to

control the country's eastern and northern borders; and in maintaining security internally. I have long advocated the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces, and urged the international community to provide equipment and training. This is important as a prerequisite for the gradual assumption of effective and sustainable security control of the UNIFIL area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters, and as a key element to support moves towards a permanent ceasefire. I am grateful to those countries that are already helping to equip and train the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the Navy. I warmly welcome the decision of the Government to further enhance the capacity and capability of the Lebanese Armed Forces over the next five years. I stand ready to help the Lebanese Armed Forces and Government of Lebanon, as appropriate, as they seek to carry the new plan forward, while also sustaining and building upon work already in hand in the Strategic Dialogue, and with regard to border management.

75. During the reporting period there was increased focus in Lebanon, as in other eastern Mediterranean States, on the opportunities to be derived from the exploration and exploitation of offshore resources. It is positive that Lebanon and Israel are preparing to exploit resources in their respective economic zones. I continue to stress that it is in the interest of both to do this in a way that will not give rise to tension. In that context, I hope that, building on efforts so far, more substantive progress can be achieved on the delimitation of maritime economic zones. The United Nations stands ready to assist should both parties request such assistance.

76. The interest of the international community in the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, enshrined in resolution 1701 (2006), is deep and long-standing. In earlier reports I have noted that the security and stability of Lebanon are closely linked to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. They are also heavily dependent on other regional developments, including those relating to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. Recently, against the backdrop of the Syrian crisis, the people of Lebanon and their leaders have demonstrated resilience and determination in seeking to protect that stability in particularly difficult circumstances. The period since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) has also seen unprecedented calm across the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel. For the peoples involved, and for regional peace and security as a whole, it is essential that the Governments of Lebanon and Israel and all other stakeholders remain committed to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) in the uncertain period ahead.

77. I wish to express my appreciation to all countries contributing troops and equipment to UNIFIL. I also commend the military and the civilian personnel of UNIFIL, as well as the staff of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, all of whom continue to play a critical role in helping to promote stability along the Blue Line and in Lebanon.